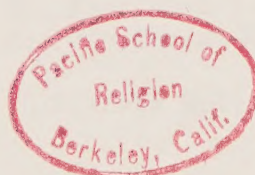


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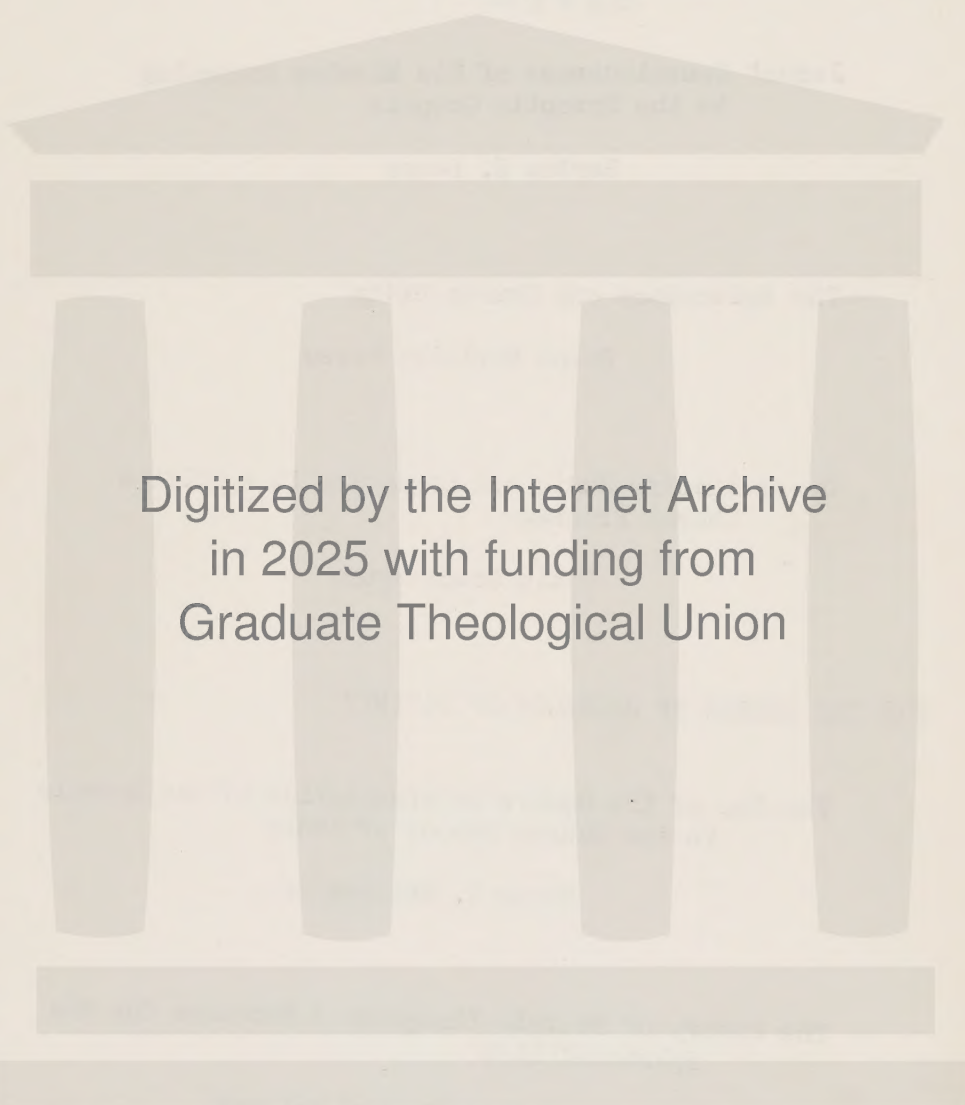
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Jesus' Consciousness of His Mission
According to the Synoptic Gospels

By

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A. B. College of Puget Sound

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Thesis

submitted in the Department of

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Jesus' Consciousness of His Mission
According to the Synoptic Gospels

I Purpose of This Thesis

The Christian conception of Jesus has so long been formed through interpretations which men have made who have lived years and even centuries after his time, that we find ourselves believing in a being such as could scarcely have been born in Palestine in 4 or 6 B.C.

As F. C. Burkitt says in writing the preface to Albert Schweitzer's book, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, "Our first duty with the Gospel as with every other ancient document, is to interpret it with reference to its own time." Even so, is the purpose of this paper--to interpret the gospels in the light of their own times; or rather those passages from the gospels which deal with the subject of this paper. It is hoped that by doing this and reviewing the material which scholars have contributed on the Life of Jesus in the last twenty-five years, some conclusion may be reached relative to Jesus' own conception of himself and his mission.

Of course it is not possible for us to say what was in the mind of Jesus. Yet the psychology of human nature

is such that with what actual evidence we find in the Synoptic Gospels we should be able to arrive at some rather definite statements as to what Jesus thought of himself, his attitude toward the people of his own race and other races and what he considered his relation to them and to God to be.

When we have discovered what he believed his relationship was to God and to man, we have discovered his consciousness of his mission.

II Source Material

1. Possible Sources

In the attempt to estimate the value of available material for historical study in questions which concern the life of Jesus, one might suppose that the earliest mention of Jesus and his teaching would be found in the Talmud; but the fact is that the references to Jesus in the Talmud are very few.

Again when we come to Josephus who wrote such a full account of Jewish life at the time of Jesus we naturally expect a detailed account of Jesus' activities; but here again the statements are few.¹

We have references to Jesus on the part of Tacitus. Suetonius and Pliny the Younger, but their references simply affirm that he lived, and died under Pontius Pilate and the fact that he had ardent followers even some years after his death.

Even in the earliest Christian sources, the Epistles of Paul, we find no reliable historical facts about the life of Jesus, except of his existence, the last supper, the crucifixion and a questioned statement that he was of the lineage of the house of David. Paul

¹ See Klausner, Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth, pp 55-56 where he quotes from Josephus' Antiquities XVIII iii 3.

consistently exalted the spiritual Christ over the historical Jesus and sought to make Christianity a matter of personal piety; consequently he was not so much interested in the historical facts of Jesus' life.

There is such a great difference between the narratives of the Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel that it is impossible to harmonize them. They are plainly contradictory as to the Chronology of Jesus' life and ministry and as to the places in which he ministered.

Many other discrepancies are found also. To illustrate: The Synoptists have the ovation at the triumphal entry offered by Galileans who accompany Jesus, while the Fourth Gospel has it offered by a multitude from Jerusalem which came out to welcome Jesus, who according to John came not from Galilee or Jericho. The Synoptic Gospels and the Fourth Gospel also differ as to the time of the entry. We cannot suppose two different triumphant entries. That would be absurd.

But the decision that the Fourth Gospel is inferior to the Synoptics as a historical source is

not based chiefly upon the representation of facts in such instances as the one cited above, but the factor which is still more decisive perhaps is the idea by which the Fourth Gospel is dominated. The writer of the Fourth Gospel is theological and apologetic. He has substituted for the Jewish Messianic conception, the Greek metaphysical conception of a Divine Sonship and the Greek speculative conception of pre-existence.

The most decisive evidence for the difference between the Fourth Gospel interpretation and that of the Synoptists is found in the farewell discourses and in the fact that the Fourth Gospel makes no mention of a spiritual struggle in Gethsemane. The writer of the Fourth Gospel intends here, according to Schweitzer, to show that Jesus had a fore-knowledge of his death and overcame the fear long before, thus meeting the tragic end with inward serenity. This Schweitzer believes is no historical narrative but reverent idealization.²

Since the Synoptic Gospels are our chief source of historical information regarding Jesus and this problem, it will be necessary to consider them next.

²The Quest of the Historical Jesus, pp 86-87.

2. The Synoptic Gospels

The Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are common views of the life of Jesus and events of his life.

The Synoptic problem consists in the peculiar combination of differences and resemblances found therein.

The documentary hypotheses used in recent research consider the problem one of literary criticism. The Gospels are written accounts made from other written accounts; hence it is necessary for us to study their literary relationship. The habits of Oriental historiography permitted a writer to incorporate a source or alter it freely for his special purpose and this of course was freely practiced by Matthew and Luke, for Mark was written for no literary purpose and was the common property of Christians; therefore they had no scruples in adapting it. ³

When we remember that none of the Gospel material was written until more than a generation after Jesus' death, we can readily understand how the compilers read the thoughts of their own time back into Jesus' sayings. We can see also that enuf time had elapsed

³ Moffatt, James, Introduction to New Testament Literature, pp 117-83.

to give place to legends about Jesus. There is always a tendency to mix legendary matter with fact and it is done in respect and reverence, as that which one would naturally expect from a great person.⁴

We cannot answer these questions, however, or scientifically study the problem unless we go back of the Gospel records to the Pre-synoptic material, that is the material from which the Synoptics arose.

3. Formgeschichte

By source we mean beginning; therefore source materials, speaking in a literary sense, are documents or writings contemporaneous with the subject about which one writes. Other materials are secondary.

In the primitive Christian community the followers of Christ expected his early return from heaven on clouds of glory, consequently they had little interest in portraying pictures of the earthly life of Jesus or of preserving accounts of events in his life for future generations. Because of this we have no writings strictly contemporary with the earthly life of Jesus.

⁴ Bosworth, E. I., The Life and Teachings of Jesus, p 6.

However, as the return of Christ was delayed, the early Christians tried to order their lives by the principles of Jesus' teaching and began to collect traditions and sayings. Though late, they preserved enuf to furnish a sufficient body of information about Jesus and his teachings to found the Christian church and to give us a fairly consistent picture of Jesus' life.

All scholars agree that with this gathering of material went also a transformation of it. It is not the fact that the original material was changed but the extent of this transformation which remains in dispute.

Definition: This is the problem which gave rise to the method of research called "Formgeschichte." The term was coined by Martin Dibelius. It means literally "form history". Its application for the most part has been restricted to the Gospels, and since it is a comparatively new method of research, not many writers considered within this paper have made use of it.

Method: It aims to show how the community was in a position to pass on some traditions accurately and what forces were operating within the community to effect the transformation of others. It seeks to ascertain first the literary form of the account and

and from this to draw conclusions as to its historical character, this process must needs take into account the aims both of literary and of historical criticism.

A good example of how this method works is pointed by Kohler:

" Mark 5.21-43 narrates the healing of the small daughter of Jairus. Mark 5.23 says: "My little daughter is at the point of death." Luke 8.42 says: "She was dying." Matthew 9.18 says: "My daughter has just now died." These versions show degeneration in the form of the narrative and are in fact the result of a tendency to heighten the effect. Jesus' act of healing is magnified if the girl is not only hopelessly sick, but lies a-dying, or has just now died. . . It is important that we should make two observations. First that the reason for the decadence in the form of the story can be perceived; and second, the type from which the process of decadence takes its start is the original and historical form."

If a form of story is found which has numerous parallels in contemporary literature, then it is logical to conclude that the story is unhistorical and only a framework to point a teaching or to produce an idea in an attractive manner.

Criticism: But the literary forms of the Gospel are not pure literary forms as Kohler shows, and he argues that Formgeschichte is not an effective technique

for the work of historical criticism. Historical criticism must concern itself with the inner characteristics of a tradition, the possibility of its changing through the interests and adaptations of the community which preserves it and its agreement with other traditions already proved genuine and trustworthy.⁵ We must remember also that primitive Christianity was concerned not so much with the biography as evangelistic and catechetical emphasis which of course would affect the literary style as well as the historical content of the Gospels.

Contribution: Bultmann, an advocate of the method of investigation called *Formgeschichte*, and one who has made successful use of it, says that it attempts to discover the various elements in the Gospels by studying typical forms of literary style. In this way it is possible to study the nature of editorial redaction and to distinguish the portions of original tradition from the secondary elements which the gospel writers have given. By comparing the literary styles in the Gospels with the contemporary Hellenistic and rabbinical literature, we can better tell whether a given expression arose in a Palestinian or Hellenistic community. It is believed that this is a great advance

⁵Ludwig, Kohler, "The Meaning and Possibilities of *Formgeschichte*", Journal of Religion, Vol. 8, 1928, pp. 603-15.

toward arriving at the historical facts concerning the preaching of Jesus.⁶

⁶Bultmann, Rudolph, "The New Approach to the Synoptic Problem", Journal of Religion, Vol. 6, 1926, 337-62.

III Social Background of the Life of Christ

1. General Culture in Palestine

The nomadic heritage of the Jews is a very important consideration. The Hebrews had for centuries been a nomadic people engaged in pastoral occupations, pitching their tent, which was their home, wherever they could pasture their flocks; much as one sees the Bedouin of Palestine living today. This manner of living influenced their thoughts and their customs; consequently their religion. Years later the Hebrew prophets looked back upon this life and called it ideal, seeing in it a more pure form of religion.

Geographic factors also helped to make the Jewish people. The climate (much like that of Southern California) produced prolifically, healthy and vigorous men and women. With a soil which required diligent labor in order to produce a mere subsistence, the occupants became very hardy indeed. Their central location on the commercial highways brought the people into contact with cultures of all the world of that day. Such a location between commercial life and desert life resulted in many conflicting ideals.

Political and cultural conflicts with other peoples produced a strong race complex. The Jewish people were conscientious; they possessed a strong and enduring religious faith; they were patriotic to the point of a selfish nationalism. The chief reason for this was perhaps the supposed covenant, to which they tenaciously clung, between God and his chosen people. This gave to them the belief of an assured national destiny.

During the time of Jesus this race pride was wounded and their faith in national destiny severely tested because they were shattered into numerous parties and the hope which they had long held that the poor would come to their rights and the wicked and powerful would suffer fitting punishment, while righteousness triumphed in a returned paradise, was not realized.

The outcome of a long social-political struggle in which the prophets had stood for the nomadic agricultural ideal of life, i.e., simplicity of living and the fights of the poor in bitter opposition to social injustice, had resulted in the Hebrew morality and religion being the highest that the western world had yet produced.

Hellenistic influences must also be considered for they affected the life of the second century Jew in a

marked and vital manner. Alexander's policy of unifying his empire by spreading Greek customs, language, and civilization thruout, was carried on by his successors. Most of the cities of Palestine became Hellenistic cities. Hellenistic tendencies with their many gods and philosophies were in direct opposition to Judaism with her Nomadic ideals and one Jahveh. When Antiochus attempted to force Hellenism upon the Jews they naturally developed an anti-foreign complex, that is the Jews in Palestine. Requirements of daily life obliged the Jews to use the Greek language and with this came Greek manners and customs. Then came the Diaspora. Jews who were unwilling to yield to Hellenizing influences suffered; men were killed; women and children were sold into slavery; and hardships prevailed once again for the true Jew. During this time also strangers were brought in for colonists; Greek gods were set up to be worshipped and many of the Jews went or were taken abroad. These last mentioned forsook their mother tongue; and being influenced by new surroundings became imbibed with the Greek spirit. From the acquisition of Greek language came adoption of Greek names, pursuit of Greek philoso-

phy, and appropriation of Greek wisdom.

Yet the social ideals of Jesus show no marks of Greek origin. Though the Jews in Palestine were familiar with the Greek world and adopted some words and ideas into their Aramaic, the attempt of Antiochus to force Hellenization upon them worked psychologically to make them hate all things Greek. The classes which were socially and economically higher were more subject to Greek influence; but the luxuries of these civilizations were expensive; hence the poor had fewer temptations from foreign civilizations.

2. Political Conditions

It is essential for us to glimpse the political life of Palestine in Jesus' day and the time just preceding, in order to understand better the social conditions.

For three hundred sixty-seven years--from Zerubbabel to Johathan Maccabeus (537-161 B.C.) Judea was an insignificant state. But the Maccabees made of it an independent kingdom and out of it fashioned the Jewish Palestine. The three persons most responsible for this were John Hyrcanus, Judas Aristobulus and Alexander Janneus. When we find it hard to forgive the lay

character of these men we should remember that but for these victories a Jewish Palestine could never have come into existence. "But for the heroism of the Maccabees the heathen must finally have swallowed up the Jews." ⁷

When at last Jerusalem was conquered by Pompey in 63 B.C. there was great slaughter. Twelve thousand Jews met death at the time of the fall of the Temple. For thirty years before Herod sat on the throne there was a series of wars; the Romans and Herod the Great destroyed all that the Maccabees had built up, and took all that the Maccabeans had conquered.

Finally Gabinus divided Jerusalem into five separate Sanhedrins and Jerusalem was no longer the principal city; just a chief provincial town. The Jews kept revolting until they were killed and captured as slaves in great numbers.

After the death of Aristobulus and his son Alexander, the Jews no longer had strong Maccabean leadership to go against the Romans. Therefore they formed themselves into guerilla bands in the Jerusalem and Galilean districts, hiding in the mountains and avenging the blood which their people had shed and the national dishonor which had been brought on them by

⁷ Klausner, Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth, p 137

the Romans and betrayers of Israel. In such attacks some innocent ones are always slain. Herod who then governed Galilee had such a band, known as the Hezekiah Band, killed without trial. This aroused the indignation of the people of Jerusalem and they compelled Hyrcanus to call Herod for judgment before the Sanhedrin. Shammai alone among those who were in the Sanhedrin dared to tell the truth and Herod had to escape lest the Sanhedrin pass the sentence upon him which his conduct deserved.

It is important that we remember that these bands were very numerous in Galilee and that ignorance and injustice and disorder were most prevalent there. The Revolutionists were strong. This helps to explain why Jesus should arise in Galilee and so quickly find disciples.

Wars were waged continuously. Mattathias Antigonus, the last king of pure Maccabean stock supported by the Parthians engaged in fierce war with Herod the Jewish Edomite King supported by the Romans, which greatly enfeebled the nation.

"Not only did Herod fight against the troops of Antigonus that were found in Galilee, but he began to

kill at sight those 'brigands' and 'Sicarii', i.e., the zealot patriots who were hidden away in the caves and mountains. Even Josephus, despite the fact that he labels them as "brigands", thus describes their great moral courage: 'A certain aged Galilean, one of the fanatics, had seven sons and when they would have obeyed Herod's command and left their cave, he stood at the mouth of the cave and killed them all one by one; and when Herod held out his hand and promised not to punish him, the old man only reviled the King for his Edomite origin and threw himself over the precipice.' So great was the hatred of the zealots against the Edomite slave, and so great their faith in the Maccabean house! Shortly after we find the Galileans drowning Herod's sympathisers in the Lake of Galilee.

Such were the Galileans near the time of Jesus, and such the state of Galilee forty years before his birth! There could not have been better material for a Messianic movement."⁸

By the time Herod the Great came to the throne (37 B.C.) not only Jerusalem but all of Palestine was a wilderness. During the thirty years from 67-37 B. C. more than one hundred thousand Jews were killed. These

⁸ Ibid., 143-144

were the best of the nation and mostly young men who had refused to suffer foreign rule. There was no longer the possibility of a great uprising--there were left only those patriots who had fire in their hearts and no clear plan in their heads; and those who would fight for the faith of their fathers and whose purpose was clear but who did not constitute a political factor because "their kingdom was not of this world." Such were those who supported Jesus.

Herod was a very cruel leader and like him was Archelaus, his son. The Jewish people themselves begged for freedom from such a rule. Finally he was dethroned and the kingdom of Herod was divided.

From the outbreak of the war between the brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, to the close of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate in Judea and the reign of Herod Antipas, in Galilee, (67 B.C.-39 A.D.) scarcely a year went by without wars or other disturbances. Thus during the generation before Jesus and during his life time there were wars, rebellions, outbreaks and riots all of them with their "concomitant of incessant bloodshed."

3. Jesus' More Immediate Social Background

The very conditions under which Jesus was born and grew to manhood indicate clearly his understanding and sympathy for the lower classes. We cannot be sure historically of the facts of Jesus' early life, but since he came from Galilee at the beginning of his ministry and since his disciples were Galileans, it is logical to believe that Nazareth was his home. At any rate since we have nothing to prove the contrary, why not accept the statement found in Mark 1.9? As far as we can learn this Nazareth was a small town, so insignificant that considerable critical opinion denies its existence in Jesus' day. Jesus was a son, perhaps the eldest son, in a poor carpenter's home. If he belonged to the royal line of David, he certainly made little use of it. His one statement shows how little he valued it, if indeed we can accept Matthew 22.42-45 as authentic. His home in Nazareth was no doubt a windowless stone hut which he shared with his family and the ass and goats if the family were rich enuf to own them. In the daytime he was employed with rough country carpenter work, for in a land where all the buildings were

of stone or brick, a carpenter was not likely to be a contractor of large building enterprises.

The quiet country side was the best suited to train a leader such as Jesus was to be, a leader of the masses in a movement that was to transform society. Many impressions were conveyed to the mind of one growing up in the hills of Galilee which would not come to one reared in Jerusalem or elsewhere in Judea. Galilee's open landscape with rounded hills may have helped produce the more liberal and even-tempered Galilean as compared with the Judean; at least it is symbolical. Because Galilee had a mixed population and was easily accessible, with caravans crossing from Damascus to Egypt, and from the Hauran and Gilead to the sea at Ptolemais and Tyre, and because of numerous Greek cities on all sides, any man reared in that section must have been familiar with the dominant qualities both good and evil in the Hellenistic civilization.

"The Galilee was a hotbed of revolutionary patriotism" it could be that men of keen intellects learned from the very experiences of suffering under Herod and the Romans that armed revolt was both futile and demoralizing.

If it be true as S. J. Case suggests, that Jesus helped rebuild Sepphoris, which was located only four or five miles from Nazareth, the revolt and consequent destruction of that place may have made a deep impression upon Jesus.

"After the death of Joseph he was evidently the head of the house and charged with the responsibilities of a father. He knew both the work and the worries of a laboring man's life, the terror of war, the pinch of poverty, the haunting fear of unemployment, the long anxiety of years of draught, the grim spectre of famine, the insolence of the wealthy employer, the callous heartlessness of the successful merchant. His living was earned by hard, rough labor with the simplest and crudest of tools in shaping rude beams and doors and rustic yokes and plows such as the Orient still uses. His sympathies would naturally lie with the simple, hard-working people and with unostentatious ways of living." ⁹

As Harry Emerson Fosdick says, the drag of the ordinary standards is always down whenever a man tries to live his best life and Jesus had to go counter to

⁹ McCown, C.C., The Genesis of the Social Gospel, pp 334-5.

many of the established customs of his day, for he was trying to live an ideal life in an unideal world and a clash was inevitable.

IV The Religious Background of Jesus

1. The Influence of Early Civilizations

In order to gain a true picture of Jesus' religious background we must recognize that back of Jewish apocalyptic literature and thought was the Old Testament--the Hebrew Scriptures--the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. Back of these were milleniums of civilization whose influences tho remote were unquestionably reflected in the religious background of every Jew.

The most remote of these civilizations, according to our present knowledge, were the Egyptian and the Summerian, recognizing that we know too little of the Hittites and Hyksos to be able to trace any connection with the Hebrews in matters moral and religious. Then, too, we have the Persian and Greek influences to reckon with.

It is difficult to say which of these peoples influenced Israel most vitally and perhaps such an attempt would be futile but it is essential to realize that "the thinking of the Hebrews can be understood only as a part of a complex cultural system. In spite of political and economic changes, the rise and fall of empires, the shifting of trade routes, and all the multifarious developments of history, in spite of marked differences

between the Hittites, the Aegean peoples, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Hebrews, the region about the eastern end of the Mediterranean was linked together into a cultural unity much as is Europe today. Neither the Arabs of the steppe nor the Greeks in their cities differed absolutely, but only by degrees, from the peoples living nearer the center of this cultural area. By the time the Hebrews had come upon the stage of action, these peoples had been living together for thousands of years. They had a common heritage of religious and mythological ideas, varying indeed from nation to nation, but at bottom alike." ¹⁰

We read the myths of these people and we see the story of Moses; we find that the Hebrews had created a "day of Yahweh" when he would overthrow evil and their enemies, just as in the beginning, according to ancient mythology, the world was created by a divine Savior-hero who overthrew the evil dragon with her many minions; we read the Code of Hammurapi and we see the Ten Commandments, etc. Indeed the parallelism is too close not to see the one in the other. "There were in all, the same reactions to the phenomena of nature, the same attitudes toward society, the same superstition, the same bondage to custom,

¹⁰ Ibid., p 117

and fundamentally similar customs, ideals, and aspirations. The higher classes, especially the thinkers who have left us the literatures of these peoples, were those among whom differentiation was most likely to appear. But they operated with the materials inherited from the past of their nations. The inventor uses old tools and materials, and in the Levant these old tools and materials were essentially the same for all, just as the same plow is used in all that region." ¹¹

Acknowledging these influences we come to the Hebrews themselves, a group of nomadic clans which invaded Palestine sometime between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries B.C. There were certain heritages which came directly from their nomadic type of life. Climate and religion were bound together for these people in a way that is foreign to our thinking. ¹² Palestinians were so dependent upon rainfall and rainfall was so uncertain that even in the midst of prosperity adversity might overtake them. Dry weather was to them the frown of God upon their manner of living.

¹¹Ibid., p 117

¹²Ibid., see pp 43 f., 54 f.

Another emphasis of Jesus' life, the traces of which we find far back in ancient history is his championship of the poor. Intef, the herald of Thothmes II claimed to be a "protector and helper of the weak." A peasant's appeal to the high steward runs thus: "Thou art a father to the orphan, a husband for the widow, a brother for her that is put away, an apron for him that is motherless." How like portions of the New Testament! We can trace this consciousness of oppression or neglect for the poor being wrong from the twelfth and eighteenth dynasties thru Job, the Prophets, the Psalms, and the apocalyptic writings down to the time of Jesus.

2. Old Testament Influence

Jesus was evidently familiar with the Old Testament as he quotes from all three divisions of it: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Jews have said that there is nothing new in Jesus' teachings. They are right as to the statements which he made. It was the meaning which he put into them, that was new and different. Jesus made full use of all the good that was current in his time, as the true teacher and successful leader will

always do; using that which was valuable from the past also. For example the first and second petitions of the Lord's Prayer may be found in a Jewish manuscript, i.e., the thought is there, but Jesus has expressed it in his own words or way.

Jesus no doubt shared the opinion of his day that the Scriptures were given direct from God, for his faith was the faith of his people. Yet he rose above the conception of his time and taught a higher conception of God than the rabbis interpreted the Scriptures to teach. While the idea of God as father, for example, was not new, it was not common in the first century. Jesus' education was not rabbinical in spirit though his teachings show traces of rabbinical method. Jesus used short pithy sayings much like the Jewish proverbs. He used many literary forms of the Old Testament and sayings of the Jewish fathers. Yet he "taught as one having authority"--not as a scribe. He must have felt that some of the Old Testament was not of God else he would not have said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said of them of old time, but I say unto you." Like the rabbis, he would have quoted other rabbis or Old

Testament writers had he not known a more significant interpretation.

A striking fact is that parallels from the Old Testament in the New Testament ascribed to Jesus are much more intelligent in conception than are those ascribed to the Gospel writers themselves. This contrast is made very vivid by Professor Bundy in his book entitled The Religion of Jesus:

"In his use of the Old Testament an interesting and instructive light falls on the mind of Jesus. His method of approach to the religious literature of his people is as simple as it is sincere. There is no elaborate exegesis, no forced interpretations, no wearisome warpings, no painful pressing of passages until they yield the desired meaning, no subtle straining of the sense of the text. Jesus did not read his own thoughts into the Old Testament and then read them out again. In this respect Jesus bears none of the marks of the schools and schoolmen of his day and people, as does Paul in his typical rabbinical exegesis with its strained senses, made meanings, and painful processes of proof and reasoning. In his use of the Old Testament we see no far-fetched allegories such as we find in I Corinthians 9.9-10 and in Galatians 4.22-31. . . We also have no indication that Jesus read the Old Testament with a view to procuring official credentials for himself and his work as did his disciples after him, who like Paul, the author of the first Gospel, and the early Christian writers in general, sought and brought from the Old Testament concrete Scriptural confirmations, not only for the major phases, but even for the minor details of Jesus' life and work. This process of proof from prophecy is especially characteristic

of the author of the first Gospel, who sees in the flight of the family into Egypt a fulfillment of Hosea 11.1 (Matt. 2.14,15). . . . The early Christian view of the Old Testament was Christocentric, a searching of the Scriptures for Messianic momenta to which the life and work of Jesus would measure up. Jesus' own use of the Old Testament is never egocentric. In only one passage (Luke 4.16-21) does he bring the Old Testament (Isa. 61.1-2) to bear directly upon himself, but even here he does not cite the Isaiah passage as an official confirmation of his identity. His use of Isaiah on this occasion is purely devotional. In other words he finds in this Isaiah passage an anticipation of his own prophetic consciousness of personal call and commission to the work of God. Jesus' conscious relationship to the Old Testament was not Christo-centric. It was purely personal, Jesus read the Old Testament for the religious message that it contained, and in his use of it we see him pressing his way to the very heart of its religious meaning. In his reading of the Old Testament Jesus stands apart in the sureness with which he grasped the finest elements of its writers' faith, in his ability to single out the essential and vital, to make this live again in its primitive purity and power, and to carry it on to its natural and complete culmination." ¹³

Such absurd uses of the Old Testament as Matthew's reference to Hosea cited above were sometimes ascribed to Jesus himself, but his use of the Old Testament has something too distinctive and characteristic about it and is so superior to those references made by the Gospel writers that it is not difficult to determine

¹³Bundy, Walter E., The Religion of Jesus, pp 15-18.

the passages which he actually used and those ascribed to him by the later Christian point of view.

Jesus did not read the Old Testament as a professional Bible scholar. He read it as a layman in somewhat the same devotional manner in which many Christians read the twenty-third Psalm and the ninety-first Psalm. As we observe the contributions of the Old Testament to the life of Jesus, we find that it supplied the base for his religious beliefs and gave support to his convictions. At decisive moments, he resorted to the Old Testament Scriptures almost as by instinct, so much a part of him had they become.

Perhaps the Prophets more than any other portion of the Old Testament influenced Jesus religiously. Indeed we may think of Jesus as the last of the Hebrew Prophets. His contemporaries saw such a rebirth of "Israel's long lost religious gift" that they called him a prophet--"but some say Elias; and others, One of the prophets." (Mk. 8.28). The prophets furnished the background out of which it was historically possible for Jesus to appear--apart from them the historical antecedents, the sources of religious genius, necessary for the development of such a prophet

would have been lacking. It was in the religion of the prophets that Jesus schooled and steeled himself. With a peculiar and fine moral sense and spiritual insight he was able to enter into the highest sentiments, deepest convictions and most profound faith of the prophets and sense the spirit of their teachings. This spirit and these teachings Jesus brought to new life enriched by his own personal experience. His great desire seems to have been to fulfill the prophetic religion of his people. He clothed himself in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Like any true prophet his religious certainties were born of deep inner conviction.

Influence of Buddha: It has been said that Jesus was greatly influenced by Buddha; that he borrowed from him; indeed some have tried to make him only another Buddha. However, if one looks into the Synoptic Gospels alone, one finds little that is Buddhistic, so we cannot consider Buddhistic thought in his religious background. What people do is to take great truths that are common to all men and original with neither Christ or Buddha and attribute it to one or the other. We have no way of proving that the stories of Buddha, such as the story of his birth, for example, were recorded until the first

century A.D. in which case the borrowing is as likely to have been on the part of Buddha, if we must indeed think that either borrowed.

3. Apocalyptic Influence

Jesus' use of the term "Son of Man" and his references to the "Son of Man" coming on the clouds, etc., lead us to believe that he was familiar with the Similitudes of Enoch. We cannot say because Rabbinic Judaism was non-apocalyptic that all first century scribes were equally non-apocalyptic. In fact today scholars agree that Christianity grew out of apocalyptic Judaism. We know that apocalyptic literature was at its height from the second century before Christ to the first century after Christ. We know also that the early Christians worked so ardently, because they expected this spectacular return of Jesus within their generation.

We cannot doubt that Jesus' religious background was greatly influenced by apocalyptic ideas. The marvel is that he did not stoop to visions and strange symbols but spoke openly and simply.

While the apocalyptic writings are beneath the prophetic writings in many respects still they preserve the prophetic ideals. Because the apocalyptists had the

prophetic ideals they were usually severe critics of things as they were. In this "atmosphere of prophetic idealism" Jesus came forth and while he does not share, we believe, the narrow nationalism of the Jews, his attitude toward society and its institutions belong to this atmosphere and if we acknowledge this we can better understand his message.

When we recall that at the beginning of the Christian era Israel had been under the power of one foreign nation after another for nearly six hundred years--Babylon, Persia, Egypt, Syria, and Rome, except for a short century of comparative freedom, we can realize how unbearable the situation had become and how faith was tested and why the apocalyptists worked out a solution for Israel--some means of compensation for her suffering--the kingdoms of this world would soon become the "Kingdom of God" and to the Jews this meant one thing, a righteous state in which God would rule as completely as they pictured him ruling in heaven.

There were different ideas as to the type of Messianic kingdom. Some believed in a new Palestine, fertile and prosperous and free from enemies and oppression. The farthest extreme from this believed in a world to come

where all would be immortal, a heavenly kingdom.

There were also different opinions as to who would bring the kingdom in. Some thought God himself would do it; some believed that God would employ an intermediary-- a Messiah; but the Jews only thought of a Messiah who would actually bring in the kingdom; a Messiah who did not accomplish this was no Messiah at all. A Messiah to them could not be merely one who taught the will of God for the Jews named such an one, "prophet."

Opinions as to what the Messiah would be differed also. The old tradition believed that he would be the "Son of David"; and just as David centuries before had rid the kingdom of its enemies, so David's Son would be a Deliverer, but in a greater way. Men who thought of the kingdom as heavenly, thought also of a heavenly Messiah. Such pictured him seated at God's right hand from the beginning of a creation, waiting for the time for him to descend from heaven to accomplish a final redemption. Strange as it may seem to us, those who held such a picture of the Messiah called him the "Son of Man."

Always in Messianic teaching earthly and heavenly conceptions were interwoven and blended, but they did not

think that the "Son of Man" would become a man, neither did they think of the messiah as suffering; his whole mission was one of triumph.

With such a background for his teaching came John the Baptist saying, "Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight;" and we could not complete even such a brief glimpse as this into the religious background of Jesus without recognizing the influence of John the Baptist.

4. Influence of John the Baptist

We know little of John the Baptist but what we do know of him shows us that he was truly a great prophet. Professor Deissmann writes, "Only a shadow of the Baptist falls across the scene of the Gospel story, but it is a truly great shadow." ¹⁴ The references which Jesus makes to John the Baptist both in public and private are sufficient evidence that he was familiar with his message, his mission and the Baptist himself. We can read echoes of his message in Jesus' teaching. But we see more clearly the full effect of John the Baptists' preaching upon Jesus in the act of his coming to John for baptism. It was a great tribute

¹⁴Quoted by Bundy, The Religion of Jesus, p 38.

to John for Jesus to show his approval in presenting himself for baptism.

Luke 7.25-28 shows clearly that he did not look upon the Baptist merely as a forerunner or advance agent, but as a powerful preacher of God--a prophet and more than a prophet. Perhaps John the Baptist had a greater personal influence upon the religious life and mission of Jesus than any other one person.

Out of such a background Jesus came forth, a normal human being, not an ecstatic or psychopath, a man of his times, a man of the people, a working man, brimming with courage and manfulness, with a depth of religious and moral insight and a transcendent personality that has made him the greatest man not only of his time, but of all time since.

During the last quarter of a century a great many books have been published on the Life of Jesus and among these one finds almost as many varieties as there are books. For this thesis a study has been made of some of the writings of scholars who have written scientific and historical treatments on this subject. These have used the Synoptics as source material as indicated by the second division of this paper. They have studied

the social conditions in which Jesus grew up and in which his career was formed. They have studied his religious background as far back as we have religious literature to the religious literature of his own time, as indicated in the fourth division.

We turn then to their treatment of our problem.

V Recent Research

Problems considered in the light of studies of the life of Christ made in the last quarter of this century.

1. In What Sense was Jesus Conscious of a Divine Sonship?

As one studies the Gospels one is impressed with the "Jewishness of Jesus". His own religious experience had its roots deep in the best of the religion of his race. He himself recognizes this: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Mt. 5.17) Yet Jesus is more than a genuine reproduction of the religion of Israel. He took seriously that which many before him and in his own day held only as tradition and custom. Professor Hocking writes, "Originality is not measured by the amount of change, but by the depths of re-thinking."¹⁵ Jesus brought together the religious faith and hope of his people in the past and purified and perfected it in his own religious experience and life by simplifying it at some points and deepening it at others, but always with an enrichment; e.g. Mt. 5.27-28, "Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery:' but I say

¹⁵Quoted by Bundy, Religion of Jesus, p 55.

unto you that everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart."

We never find Jesus making a complete break with the religion of the past, tho he was in open conflict with the conventional conception and the letter-of-the-law followers of his day. It was the pure spirit of the law and the prophets which Jesus taught.

No doubt a great many elements in Jesus' own religion came to him thru a social and religious heritage and yet in spite of all of these which he held in reverence, he places himself on the side of a religion of the spirit rather than a religion of authority--"The sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath." In this connection we quote Coe who said, "Religious experience itself is a revaluation of values." ¹⁶

It is not Jesus' religious opinions that made him unique but his religious experience that expressed itself in a great personal faith and consciousness of God and his relation to Him. Real religious faith is not something to be nourished and cherished, it becomes the creative element in the character of an individual and the controlling force in his conduct. Jesus was not an advocate

¹⁶ Bundy, The Religion of Jesus, p 59, quoting Coe's, The Psychology of Religion.

of theological or philosophical views; he was a preacher and teacher of what God can mean in human life and the meaning of God which he taught was what he had experienced of God in his own personal life. Any doubt concerning God's existence seems never to have entered the mind of Jesus. He never spoke to his hearers in order to prove the reality of God, such a discourse would have been unnatural if not historically impossible both for him to give and his audience to appreciate. Any such doubt was foreign to their thinking. Jesus therefore was concerned with revealing the will of God rather than proving his existence. Jesus' faith in God is the basis of his ministry.

We have already pointed out his use of Isa. 61.1-2 in Luke 4:16-21, which shows that he feels himself called of God and commissioned to a very definite task. The very fact that we say that Jesus had a religious consciousness is an indication of a human limitation. To quote Hocking again, "Man has religion because he is not wholly identical with God."¹⁷ Christian thought that points with pride to details which express physical limitations, making Jesus share our weaknesses, such as

¹⁷ Ibid., p 142, quoting Hocking's, The Meaning of God in Human Experience.

his weeping over Jerusalem (Luke 19.41) and his hunger (Mk. 11.12), overlooks the more profound fact upon which Jesus stands as a historical human figure--his sense of limitation expressed in the fundamental religiousness of his whole personality.

Jesus frankly confesses that his knowledge is limited. While moved with a deep conviction it is true that he declares that heaven and earth shall pass away but that his own words shall not (Mk. 13.31) but even at this high point he is conscious of limitation for in the next verse we read, "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Again Jesus confesses a limitation of power when two of his disciples made this request: "Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand in thy glory." (Mk. 10.37) He replied, "To sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared." (Mk 10.40) Here, it seems to me, we have a proof that Jesus was not pre-existent for his very confession that to sit on his right hand and on his left was not his to

give but would be given to those for whom it had been prepared shows that his own picture of the Kingdom of God was like the Jewish conception. Had he been in heaven previously would he not have had a different picture and would he not have so told his disciples?

Again Jesus is conscious of limitations of personal worth when the rich young Ruler comes asking, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" At once comes Jesus' reply, not to answer the question, but to correct what he deems a wrong impression of his worth, "Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God."

Having pointed out Jesus' consciousness of human limitations, we turn to his consciousness of divine sonship not as one sent down from God, but chosen of, or called out by, God.

Jesus called God "Father", realizing his dependence upon him and conscious of such a difference as we might liken to the difference which a human son finds existing between him and his father--the child knows that the father is far ahead of him and yet because of his great confidence in him, dependence upon him and love for

him, can enjoy an intimate fellowship with him. Jesus did possess a clear conscious call which to him was a divine commission to speak as God's spokesman; he felt a unique sonship and yet we do not find him interpreting his relation with the father to a supernatural birth. He comes forth with a public decision after his own awakening under John the Baptist's ministry.

We must recall here that nothing of the virgin birth, the angel visits, the star in the east, the boy-Christ in the temple, had been recorded, indeed, we cannot say that these stories had ever been rumored at the time of Jesus' baptism. No one present at the baptism as far as we have any record, said, "Behold this is he whom Herod sought," or "Whom the wise men worshipped," or "This is the young boy who puzzled the doctors in the Temple." But Jesus here sensed God's approval and whether anyone else saw a form like a dove rest upon him, or heard a voice, he felt as never before that God had chosen him to assume some form of leadership in the New Age, as Bosworth puts it.

I believe that John like the prophets of the Old Testament prophesied a coming Messiah and prepared the way no better than Amos and Isaiah perhaps, who also

urged the people to repent and turn from their wicked ways, lest the 'day of Yahweh' come upon them and find them unprepared. But this time there was a Jesus to step forth and say, "I am he." Whereas before no one had been willing to fully surrender himself to God, Jesus gave himself completely to God's service and because he did this he saw clearly into the heart of life. Speaking in Moody phraseology, up to that time, the world had not seen what God could do with an individual fully surrendered to him, and the world has not yet seen the end of what his life meant.

Taking this view we must conclude that Jesus' consciousness of divine sonship was not a conception of an abnormal or miraculous offshoot of Deity clothed in human flesh, but rather that it was a wholesome and normal relationship to God which he could sincerely invite mankind to accept and follow because it was within man's power to achieve.

Since we have no better example, let us turn to the human father and son again. A young man of today becomes "his father's own son" (using that expression with a depth of meaning) when he holds in reverence those things which his father loves, when he studies and contemplates

upon his father's conduct and attitudes, is anxious to get his father's opinion on all matters, and hurries to him to "talk things over" when he must make a difficult decision. Such a son has an understanding of the father such as the other children do not have. He does not argue over the misuse of a word or an illustration because he knows the attitude and spirit of the father so well that he gets the meaning even tho the phraseology may err, or on the other hand, be beyond his understanding technically.

So Jesus studied God's dealings with men, talked much with the Soul of the Universe, sought to know and to understand God and he did. Then in trying to get the other children in the great human family to understand their Father he gave the world the highest conception of God which it had had up to his time, tho he himself became "despised and rejected."

2. What did Jesus Understand the Terms "Son of God", "Son of David," and "Son of Man" to Mean for Himself?

"Son of God" was not a common Messianic title. The Jews were not even to utter the name of God. The Jews did not ascribe divine descent to the people or to their kings. If Psalms 2 and 89 refer to the people of Israel, it is a special relation to God that is asserted and not a procreation in a literal sense. "Even in Messianic expositions, an Israelite will always have taken the title "Son of God" in a figurative sense, there being no incentive in this connection to interpret it otherwise than was usual elsewhere." ¹⁸ There was no divine right of kings.

The great awakening which came at Jesus' baptism brought to him a new sense of sonship, not only was he now a son of God but The Son Beloved, Chosen of God for a mission--to prepare his people for and lead them into God's New Age. But always it was God's spirit welling up within him that made this sense of sonship, not that Jesus was a heavenly being. ¹⁹ There is no question

¹⁸ Dalman, Gustaf, *The Words of Jesus*, p 272.

¹⁹ Bosworth, E. I, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus*, p 68.

about a complete and unclouded filial relationship between God and Jesus, we find him continually addressing God as Father and in the same sense teaching his disciples to pray "Our Father."

"Son of David": Tho the Davidic dynasty had apparently ended centuries before, some still felt that God would raise up a Warrior Prince with military genius to deliver his people. This expectation in its clearest and perhaps best form is found in Psalms of Solomon. It is an advantage of the historical and critical study of Jesus that it takes into account such apocryphal writings as the Psalms of Solomon. This was not done in the old school, for they were not in the canon, therefore not considered authentic. This Psalmist recognizes God as an everlasting King but believes that he has chosen David as an under king and promised that his dynasty would not fail. This idea is brought out in Psalm of Solomon 17.21-27:

"Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David,
At the time in which thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel thy servant.
And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers,
And that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction.

Wisely, righteously he shall thrust out sinners from (the)
 inheritance,
 He shall destroy the pride of the sinner as a potter's
 vessel.
 With a rod of iron he shall break in pieces all their
 substance,
 He shall destroy the Godless nations with the word of
 his mouth;
 At his rebuke all nations shall flee before him,
 And he shall judge the tribes of the people that have
 been sanctified by the Lord his God.
 And he shall not suffer unrighteousness to lodge any
 more in their midst,
 Nor shall there dwell with them any man that knoweth
 wickedness,
 For he shall know them, that they are all sons of
 their God."²⁰

In Jesus' public teaching at the temple he criticised
 the "Son of David" conception of messiahship. He quoted
 Psalms 110.1 accepting the current idea that David was the
 author of it, (Mk. 12.35-37a cf. Mt. 22.42, and Lk. 20.41)

²⁰See McCown, op. cit., pp 243-244.

"And Jesus answered and said as he taught in the temple,
 How say the scribes that the Christ is the son of David?
 David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto
 my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine
 enemies the footstool of thy feet. David himself calleth
 him Lord; and whence is he his son?" Jesus asked how
 David could apply the worshipful title Lord to his son.
 It was contrary to Oriental ideas of culture or propriety
 that an ancestor should so humble himself before a
 descendant.

We must not say that his use of this scripture shows
 that Jesus ever denied Davidic lineage; but it certainly
 shows how absurd he believed the Jewish emphasis upon
 Davidic sonship to be. This title "Son of David" was not
 attractive to Jesus because it carried too much of a
 military connotation. The scribes and pharisees were
 trying to make Jesus an object of suspicion politically
 among the Roman officials and he points out the fact
 that it was the scribes who taught the "Son of David"
 type of messianism. He disclaimed for himself any such
 military ideas.

The "Son of Man" idea had a different origin from
 the above titles. Daniel pictures "One like unto a son

of man" coming on the clouds of heaven. The Similitudes of Enoch present a heavenly Messiah called the "Son of Man" which interprets Daniel's "One like unto a son of man" as a celestial person, divinely endowed with world-wide wisdom and appointed to be the judge of all men.

To quote:

"And there I saw One, who had a head of days,
 And his head was white like wool,
 And with Him was another being whose countenance
 had the appearance of a man,
 And his face was full of graciousness,
 like one of the holy angels,
 And I asked the angel who went with me and
 showed me all the hidden things,
 Concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and
 whence he was, (and) why he went with
 the Head of Days?

And he answered and said unto me:
 This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness,
 With whom dwelleth righteousness,
 And who revealeth all the treasures of that
 which is hidden,

Because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him,
 And whose lot hath the pre-eminence before
 the Lord of Spirits in uprightness forever.

And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen
 Shall raise up the kings and the mighty from
 their seats,
 (And the strong from their thrones)

And shall loosen the reigns of the strong,
 And break the teeth of the sinners;

(And he shall put down the kings from their
 thrones and kingdoms)
 Because they do not extol and praise Him,
 Nor humbly acknowledge whence the kingdom was
 bestowed upon them." --Enoch 46.1-5.

"And at that hour the Son of Man was named
In the presence of the Lord of Spirits,
And his name before the Head of Days.

Yea, before the sun and the signs were created,
Before the stars of the heaven were made,
His name was named before the Lord of Spirits.

He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon
to stay themselves and not fall,
And he shall be the light of the Gentiles,
And the hope of those who are troubled of heart.

All who dwell on earth shall fall down and worship
before him,
And will praise and bless and celebrate with
song the Lord of Spirits.
And for this reason hath he been chosen and
hidden before Him,
Before the creation of the world and forevermore.

And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits hath
revealed him to the holy and righteous;

Because they have hated and despised this world
of unrighteousness,
And have hated all its works and ways in the
name of the Lord of Spirits:
For in his name they are saved,
And according to his good pleasure hath it been
in regard to their life."

--Enoch 48.2-7.

II Esdras does not develop the phrase as we find it in
the Similitudes but the depth of its messianic interpretation
of Daniel 7.13 is just as clear. It is reasonable to
assume that other apocalyptic writings of the same period
founded themselves on the vision in Daniel.²¹ Thus
inevitably the phrase becomes messianic.

²¹ Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Art. by George P.
Gould, p 661.

Here again recent research has shown the Authorized Version misleading and uncovered the fact that Daniel was not prophesying the Son of Man of the New Testament but a figure like a human man representing Israel as the identification with the "Saints of the Most High" shows in that same chapter. It was Enoch and other apocalyptic writers who so interpreted Daniel.

A study of these apocalyptic writings in conjunction with the New Testament convinces one that apocalyptic ideas form the background of the conception of the Son of Man which Jesus and the New Testament set forth, for they were contemporary with the life of Jesus and formed a large part of his immediate background. When this title was used by Jesus concerning himself the only question to the public mind was his right to so apply it.

"Son of Man" was a title which lent itself to Jesus' use. He did not want the people who held the Jewish messianic idea that the Messiah must become the liberator of Israel thru combat to so think of him. Jesus showed no opposition to the scriptural teaching about the king who should reign in righteous-

ness over the people (Isa. 11.1-5, Mic. 5.2, Jer. 23.5, 33.15, and Zech. 9.9). He was conscious of being endowed with the Spirit of God and this was a mark of the messianic king (Isa. 11.2) as well as of the servant of the Lord (Isa. 42.1, 61.1).²² This title permitted the blending of the conception of the Suffering Servant with that of the Messianic King. Daniel did not suggest it but neither did that interpretation exclude it and Jesus gave it this great enlargement. As soon as his disciples exclaimed, "Thou art Christ" he began to teach them that the "Son of Man" must suffer.

"It was a title already associated with the glorious coming of One who should have everlasting rule over a world in which the powers of evil should no more have away." This was the expectation which Jesus had as he entered upon his suffering and it was the hope which he sought to strengthen in his followers as he spoke to them so frequently of the "Son of Man."²³ He used not the Davidic but the Enoch interpretation of a Messiah.²⁴

²²Dalman, Gustaf, The Words of Jesus, pp 309-17.

²³See Mk. 8.38, 13.26, 14.62, Mt. 25.31 ff.

²⁴See Bousset, W., Jesus, p 92 ff.

This use of the title is rather a play on words, it seems to me, and yet the thought expressed is in keeping, I believe, with the spirit of Jesus, so I am using it: "Son of Man" spoke not only of a closer association with God than any other messianic title, but also of a closer association with man--with the race. He was not a son of David, a King of Israel, but the Son of Man.

"It is in such reasons as these that we may find the true clue to our Lord's adoption of this name--not in its supposed unfamiliarity, nor in an ambiguity, enabling the speaker to use it in one sense while he confidently anticipated that he would be understood in another by his hearers."²⁵ That is not in keeping with the spirit of Jesus.

When Did Jesus Become Conscious of His Messiahship?

Having shown that Jesus had a messianic conception concerning himself the question arises, When did he become conscious of it? Some scholars, from whom we may cite Easton as an Example, hold that Jesus had been long conscious of God's call but in doubt as to its exact nature until his baptism by John, at which time

²⁵Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Art. by George P. Gould, pp 659-665 for last three uses of title.

he came forth "unshakably conscious that he was the Messiah."²⁶ Other scholars of whom Bosworth's view is representative believe that at the baptism Jesus had an awakening which caused him to see his life task much on the order of the experience which we speak of today as a "call from God." It was at this time that Jesus realized that he was not only a son of God but The Son of God, Chosen and Beloved, yet not until later in his ministry did he look upon himself as the Messiah. There are a number of reasons for this view. First of all the wilderness experience as to how his mission might be performed followed the baptism and here he was still undecided. (This experience will be discussed later.) Then Jesus was a suffering servant, not a Warrior Prince riding forth to suddenly conquer the enemies of his people.

But the most pertinent consideration as to when Jesus was fully decided that he was to be the Messiah to usher in the kingdom is his use of the term "Son of Man". As has been shown this very term enabled Jesus to interpret his Messiahship in the best possible way.

²⁶Easton, Christ in the Gospels, p 179.

Because this title is always put in the third person and because the disciples did not understand previous to Jesus' death what he meant, some have argued that Jesus never used the term in reference to himself, e.g. Windisch states that Jesus "actually existed, for his life and death were the indispensable incentive for the new religion," but that the real secret of the origin of Christianity is the circulating of what they call the Son of Man Myth which did not fix itself upon the person of Jesus until after his death and thus the hopes of the common people found expression.²⁷ However, such attempts to take from Jesus his application to himself of the title the "Son of Man" are not valid.²⁸ There is more to be said against them than in favor.

The term Son of Man occurs in the Synoptics as follows in the order suggested by Mark:

²⁷See also Patton, Carl S., "Did Jesus Call Himself the Son of Man?", Journal of Religion, Vol. 2, 1922, pp 501-11.

²⁸See Sanford, A. M., "Did Jesus Call Himself the Son of Man?" (another point of view) Journal of Religion, Vol. 3, 1923, pp 308-13.

<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>	
9.6	2.10	5.24	"hath authority on earth to forgive sins"
12.8	2.28	6.5	"Is lord of the sabbath"
12.32a	(3.28)	12.10a	"Whosoever shall speak a word against"
(5.11)		6.22	"When men reproach you, etc., for the sake. . ."
(10.23)			"Shall not have finished the cities of Israel, till . . ."
(10.32)		12.8	" <u>Him</u> shall the . . . confess before.."
11.19		7.34	"Came eating and drinking"
8.20		9.58	"Hath not where to lay his head"
(16.4)	(8.12)		"As Jonah was three days, etc. . (Mt);
12.40		11.30	"As Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, etc. (Lk)
13.37			"He that soweth the good seed is"
13.41			"Will send forth his angels"
16.13	(8.27)	(9.18)	"Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" Some ancient authors for Mt. 16.13 read "that I, the Son of man, am."
(16.21)	8.31	9.22	"Must suffer many things, be killed, and rise again."
16.27	8.38	9.26	"Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory, etc., (Mk, Lk); for the Son of Man shall come in, etc."
16.28	(9.1)	(9.27)	"Shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming"
17.9	9.9	(9.3)	"To tell the vision to no man till the Son of Man be risen from the dead"
17.12	9.12		"To suffer like Elijah (John the Baptist)"
17.22	9.31	9.44	"Shall be delivered into the hands of men"
19.28	(10.29)	(18.29)	"In the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne"
20.18	10.33	18.31	"to be delivered to the chief priests and rise again."
20.28	10.45	(cf. 22.27 & 17.22)	"To give his life a ransom for many"

<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>	
			"When ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man"
24.27		17.24	"As the lightning - so shall the coming"
24.30a	(13.26)	21.27	"Shall see the Son of Man coming (on) the clouds of Heaven"
		21.36	"Watch. . .that ye may be able to stand before the Son of Man"
24.37		17.26	"As were the days of Noah so shall be"
24.39		(17.27)	"As they were in those days. . . So shall be the coming. . ."
		17.30	"As the days of Lot. . .) so shall it in the day that the Son of Man is revealed."
		18.8	"When the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?"
		19.10	"Come to seek and to save that which was lost"
24.44	(cf. 13.33)	12.40	"In an hour that ye think not"
25.31			"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory"
26.2	(14.1)	(22.1)	"After two days the passover cometh and the Son of Man is delivered"
26.24a	14.21a	22.22a	"Goeth even as it is written of him"
26.24b	14.21b	(22.22b)	"Woe unto him through whom. . . is betrayed"
26.45	14.41		"Is betrayed into the hands of sinners"
(26.49)	(14.45)	22.48	"Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss"
26.64	14.62	22.69	"From now ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power"
(28.6)	(16.6)	24.7	"Saying that the Son of Man must be delivered, etc., and rise again."

The occasions fall naturally into two groups:

1. Those in which the reference is to some aspect or other of the earthly work of Christ, in the time of his humility (including particularly his sufferings and death.)
2. Those to which the reference is to his future coming in glory. A crucial passage: Mt. 16.13. ²⁹

If we assume that the title "Son of Man" was already a Messianic title before Jesus used it he can have adopted it only after Peter's confession of his Messiahship at Caesarea Philippi. When we examine the Synoptics to see if we are justified in arriving at such a conclusion, we find the phrase only twice prior to this event in Mark (2.10,28), Luke has it four times (5.24, 6.5,22 and 7.34) and Matthew nine times (8.20, 9.6, 10.23, 11.19, 12.8,32, 40, 13.37,41). In far the greatest number of times the title is used after the Caesarea Philippi instance.

In examining the first passage in Mark with its parallels in the other Synoptics, used prior to Peter's confession (Mk 2.10, Lk 5.24, Mt. 9.6) we find that quite early in his ministry when in the presence of hostile

²⁹ Dictionary of the Bible, Hastings, James, and Selbie, John A., Vol. IV., N. Y. Chrales Scribner's Sons, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1902 Article "Son of Man" by S. R. Driver, pp 579-580.

scribes, Jesus identified himself with the "Son of Man". It may be that this passage is out of position chronologically or it may be that Jesus was merely saying that even a man, referring to himself, hath authority; as Matthew 9.6 would infer: the multitudes who stood by "glorified God, which had given such authority unto men." Similarly Jesus seems to refer to man and not to the Son of Man in Mark 2.28 (Lk 6.5, Mt 12.8) in regard to Sabbath observance. He is justifying his disciples, not himself.

So in the various instances in which Jesus' self-designation appears in the Synoptic Gospels prior to Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, there is not one which upon examination can be held to give proof that he used a messianic title for himself prior to this occasion. ³⁰

It is interesting here to note a new passage for Jesus' use of the term as worked out by Bruno Violet who suggests that the Syriac rendering of the verb in the so-called "cursing of the fig tree" need not be rendered 'no man shall eat,' but 'no man will eat', and further that in Galilean Aramaic a word for man may have

³⁰ Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Art. "When Did Our Lord Adopt the Title 'Son of Man'?" G. P. Gould, Vol. II, 1908, pp 662-3

been used which would cause the passage to read, 'The Son of man will never again eat fruits from thee.'³¹ This attempt is worth noting for not only does it give a more natural attitude of Jesus toward the fig tree but would certainly indicate that he referred to himself.

We conclude that Jesus never declared his Messiahship to anyone openly before Peter's confession. Nevertheless he must have had a messianic mission in mind for some time (we cannot put our finger on a definite moment when he realized it) but of such a different type than the common conception that he hesitated to announce it lest he be misunderstood. Even those who held the apocalyptic idea of the Son of Man did not think of a suffering servant dying, rising, ascending into heaven and coming back from heaven, they expected him to come from heaven in the first place and set up a rule. Their ancient seers had seen this Son of Man in visions, how could it then be the Nazarene?

I have intentionally used only those passages from the Synoptic Gospels which are commonly acknowledged as authentic. However these most pertinent to the development of my thesis such as: Luke 4.16-21; 10.21-22;

³¹Schmidt, Nathaniel, Recent Study of the Term 'Son of Man', Journal of Biblical Literature, 45 pt. 3-4; p 337, 1926.

13.31-33; 17.20-24; Mark 8.31; 13.32; I have checked with Moffatt's Introduction and several commentaries.³² In no case did I find them unauthentic; on the contrary very certain historically as for example, the commentaries say that Luke 10.21-22 is a passage that cannot be doubted and that it undoubtedly came from the Q document. Early and late authorities agree in the assertion that Jesus claimed to be in a class by himself with God the Father, over against all created beings in heaven and earth.

One exception may be that in the 13th of Mark. This chapter is called the little apocalypse. It has exactly the tone and outlook of apocalypticism. Almost every phrase of verses 7, 8, 14-20, and 24-29 can be paralleled in earlier apocalyptic literature. Many think these verses seem to be a contradiction of Jesus' other teachings for he insists that no one will know of his coming; it will be sudden and unexpected and these verses tell of various signs by which we may forecast his coming.

³²Davies, J. Newton, "Mark", The Abingdon Bible Commentary.

Gould, Ezra P., "Mark", International Critical Commentary

Ward, H. G., "Mark", A Commentary on the Bible, edited by Arthur S. Peake.

These inconsistencies have caused many scholars to conclude that this thirteenth chapter of Mark contains Jewish apocalyptic conceptions not voiced by Jesus. Some conclude that it was a pamphlet which circulated independently for a time and was mistakenly attributed to Jesus. Others hold that it is in keeping with Jesus' ideas and certainly Markan. The 32d verse is one of Schmiedel's "pillar passages". According to him any passage admitting a limit to Christ's knowledge must be trust-worthy history.

Bacon in his book: The Gospel of Mark claims validity for it as being truly Markan and an interpretation of apocalyptic Scripture. He claims that the Markan form of the apocalypse has been affected by the Pauline apocalypse.³³ He says further "The Eschatological Discourse (Chapter 13) is proof sufficient that Mark goes beyond Paul in his dependence on Daniel. In his little apocalypse he combines Daniel with elements of Q and in Q 'the Son of Man' is a favorite self-designation of Jesus;" tho in the servant sense.

We may conclude then that the authenticity of the Markan apocalypse has not been sufficiently disproved to excise it from the sayings of Jesus.

³³See I and II Thessalonians

3. Of What Significance to Jesus was the Temptation in the Wilderness?

The Gospels make it clear that Jesus became aware of his mission at his baptism, that is, that he had a special work to do in connection with the Kingdom of God about which John had been preaching. This being true it is quite likely that he went thru an initial struggle as to the nature of that mission. It must be borne in mind however, that this was an initial and not a final struggle about it, the tempter we are told left him "for a season" and Jesus had many doubts and questions arise later, almost a constant struggle in fact, as to the next step, according to the records. This experience was a determining factor however, and granting that Jesus had many struggles later, still we are justified in believing that he never swerved from the principles established at this time of temptation. He never yielded to these temptations later on.

Taking up the temptations in the Lukan order:

In the first we find Jesus faced with the hungry multitudes and the age-old hope of his people for a "land flowing with milk and honey;" but he decided that

a messianic feast was not sufficient for "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God!" His duty was not to provide physical comforts, but to turn men's thoughts to God and to teach men to yield to God's will.

The second temptation, as is quite generally accepted, was a suggestion to Jesus to adopt the current nationalistic expectation. Here either of two types might have been chosen: the Davidic Prince as has been pictured in the Psalms of Solomon as quoted above, who would "thrust out the sinners from the inheritance, utterly destroy the proud spirit of the sinners," but would use no carnal weapons for he was to "destroy the ungodly nations with the word of his mouth." ³⁴ This was surely a temptation.

The other type was the Zelotic expectation. This was a bold, crude form of Jewish national hope that might be compared to Bolshevism of the present day--a temptation to direct action in open revolt against Rome. Again Jesus decided that compromise with evil was not the way to serve God.

The third temptation which set before Jesus the use

³⁴ McCown, C. C., "The Temptation of Jesus Eschatologically and Socially Interpreted," reprinted from The Biblical World, Vol. 53, No. 4, July, 1919, p 403.

of the miraculous and spectacular as one way of showing himself to be God's chosen Son, many have interpreted as a facing of the apocalyptic expectation then current, of a Messiah who should appear suddenly in a supernatural fashion. Streeter puts it this way:

" If the Kingdom is not to be established by the sword, it can only be by an act of God such as the Apocalyptists picture. But if so, is the Christ to wait and work, or should he by some startling act precipitate the consummation? The Son of Man was expected to appear in the sky with attendant angels. Should he then fling himself from the highest pinnacle of the Temple in the sight of all Jerusalem, trusting that God, to save his Christ from destruction, would send a flight of angels to his support? Such an attempt to 'force the hand' of God, inconsistent with trust in the Heavenly Father taught elsewhere, is decisively rejected." ³⁵

Giving this interpretation to the third temptation and then showing Jesus to declare himself the Messiah (Son of Man conception) before his death presents Jesus as inconsistent unless we say, as it seems to me we may rightly infer from his reply, "Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God," that Jesus may have thought that in due time God would use the miraculous if necessary, but that he should not presume upon God or "run ahead" of God's will as it were; but that he should leave that

³⁵Ibid., pp 404-5, quoting Streeter.

which he could not be sure of with God. Bosworth interprets Jesus' decision relative to this third temptation in keeping with this thesis by such clear expression as follows:

"His reply, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,' shows that he came to regard such action as presuming upon God, as rushing forward in the enthusiasm of a newly discovered mission expecting God to sustain him in whatever picturesque exhibition of power he might wish to make. He must not assume that his sense of leadership is necessarily 'Messianic'. He must not seek personal prestige. He must rather wait for God to thrust him forward in his own good time into whatever sort of leadership God may will. As a result of this consideration he kept the sense of Messianic leadership, which did develop in him later, a secret from the public until the very end when the revelation of it cost him his life. His mission was not at first to overbear men with startling exhibitions of sheer power, but to hold before the nation ideals of righteousness that should win their assent, produce character and prepare them for the life of the New Age." ³⁶

³⁶ Bosworth, Edward I., The Life and Teachings of Jesus, p 77.

4. Just What Was Jesus' Conception of His Messiahship?

When we try to solve the problem of what Jesus thought of himself there are two great difficulties. One is that our sources of information come from a period some years later than the time of Jesus. Hence primitive Christology and current theological conceptions are interwoven with historical data. The second difficulty is the fact that Jesus does not appear to have been as interested in what men should call him as are his followers. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Mt. 7:21). By comparing the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel one may readily see this truth. The Fourth Gospel writer has Jesus continually defending himself and teaching men about his person which is not true in the other Gospel writers, especially from the Q document. ³⁷

Regardless of what Jesus called himself or how little concerned with a title he may have been, we still find him speaking as never man spoke: "Everyone that

³⁷Berry, J. B., "Whom Say Ye That I Am?", Methodist Quarterly Review, July 1930, 79:477.

heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man." How contemptible a remark but for the intrinsic truth of the words. He made demands upon his disciples that would have been unreasonable had he not known the rewards which he promised would be given. He called men to endure suffering, persecution, even death for his sake and asked them to follow him. He must have been very sure of God himself for men to find God in him as they did. The facts persuade one that Jesus either spoke with authority or blasphemed. ³⁸ Some question his sanity but though I have read to some extent in Bundy's Psychic Health of Jesus and other writings on the subject of Jesus' mental condition, I have not chosen to discuss the sanity of Jesus at length in this paper, for that whole matter is most obnoxious to me. Even psychologists agree that we cannot draw a line and say that all on one side are normal and all on the other side are abnormal, sub-normal, or supernormal for who is going to say what is normal? It seems to me like trying to 'burn the

³⁸Ibid., pp 478-479.

last straw' in a field of evidence which makes Jesus different from othermen, when we call that very pronouncement of superiority or authority which made him unique, insanity. To my mind it is unworthy of a Christian scholar; we have no evidence except as we bring him down to our level and if the best of men always have and still do look upon his life as an ideal life, then we have no evidence.

Besides, calling one's self "Son of Man" with all its apocalyptic meaning was not thought an insane thing in Jesus' day as it would be thought today. According to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, John Hyrcanus was hailed as Messiah. The people expected a God-man to rule. There is no reason why a Jew who seriously believed himself commissioned of God to cause His will to be done on earth should not interpret his task as that of the expected Messiah, particularly if he was of the Davidic line as it seems Jesus was.³⁹ "What the twentieth century Occidental deems mental sanity is a poor criterion to apply to first century Galileans. Many persons among us expect a proximate millenium

³⁹ McCown, Chester Charlton, The Genesis of the Social Gospel, p 325.

without losing their mental balance; in first century Palestine every sign of the times pointed irresistibly to the fulfillment of God's promises to interpose into the course of this earth's normal progress." ⁴⁰

Dropping with these few remarks the subject of Jesus' sanity, let us go on to consider various views that he may have held of himself as the Messiah.

Relative Importance of the Eschatology of Jesus

Albert Schweitzer, that great exponent of an eschatological gospel with an eschatologically-minded Jesus has made a very profitable contribution to the study of the problem involved in this thesis, and yet it seems to me that he and his ardent followers have pressed their particular point to the exclusion of other points of view equally as profitable. As Case puts it:

"A better acquaintance with the apocalyptic literature of Judaism, combined with a larger use of Mark as the key to Jesus' thinking (and Schweitzer rightly followed proper critical research in this), produced the eschatological interpretation so widely in vogue for the last twenty-five years. Not infrequently it was taken to be the final word on the subject of Jesus' self-estimate. . . Prominent New Testament

⁴⁰Easton, Burton Scott, Christ in the Gospels, p 161.

scholars on both sides of the Atlantic subscribed to this opinion. There remained, it is true, a few notable skeptics, but their audiences were small. The voice of a more vociferous Schweitzer easily drowned out the utterances of a more modest Wrede. . .

Today the audience of the skeptics seems to be on the increase. Doubts regarding eschatology as an adequate imagery for the self-interpretation of Jesus have recently emerged in different quarters. But, unquestionably, even the earliest strata of Gospel tradition clearly imply apocalyptic self-classification for Jesus. Yet in the last analysis this representation may be only a residuum of early Christological speculation on the part of the disciples. The utmost that one could say is that beyond doubt, in the circles of Christendom where this segment of the Gospel story was formulated, it was firmly believed that Jesus had been raised to heaven and inducted into the office of the coming apocalyptic Son of Man. For Christians in the middle of the first century to entertain this conviction meant ascribing the same opinion to Jesus himself. Here again the mind of the Master may have become known first thru the mind of the disciples."⁴¹

That Jesus believed the 'day of Yahweh' at hand is evident by his close alignment with John the Baptist who so preached; and by his own words at the opening of his ministry. In trying to prepare his people to pass judgment and be fit for the kingdom in that day, he was acting as a prophet. If asked to classify himself at the beginning of his ministry, doubtless he would have

⁴¹Case, Shirley Jackson, "The Alleged Messianic Consciousness of Jesus", Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. 46, 1927, pp 9-10.

called himself a prophet. Did not the prophets of old think of themselves as true spokesmen of God, who had heard his voice deep in their own souls revealing to them a message which was to be passed on to their audiences? These men were confident that they had been chosen of God for their tasks, but they did not expect self-exaltation.

Similarly Jesus turned his energies to the task of preparing his followers for the kingdom rather than to personal concern over messianic self-interpretation. That he should feel himself empowered by the Spirit to this new God-given task was natural for a religious Jew. Had not heaven shown favor to Joseph, Moses, David, and a line of prophets? Yet confident as were these men that God had chosen them they were aware of hardships and obstacles. Jesus had learned in the Scriptures of prophets who would have resisted the divine call if possible. He knew that they met with opposition, that their lives were in danger, their message unappreciated and their followers few. The 'revolutionary psychology' of his day invited a leader to come forth who could demonstrate in a miraculous manner some divine equipment which would lead a successful revolt against Rome. But Jesus saw his

path of duty taking another direction--he must summon the Jewish people to conformity with the will of God, and his faith in God was such that he believed that God would do the rest.

To what extent Jesus accepted the apocalyptic scheme eventually, in accepting the title of "Son of Man" is difficult to say. On the whole he did not take an apocalyptic view of the world. For such a view was pessimistic, mechanical and externalistic. But Jesus' world was not like that. It was not growing worse and worse; it was ruled by a loving Heavenly Father who heeds the sparrow's fall and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust. Righteousness to Jesus was not a thing to be imposed from without but could only be developed from within the person.

Inconsistent also with apocalyptic ideas are the sayings of the parables. We must not read evolutionary progress into them; Jesus was rather showing that the kingdom would certainly come even as a plant from the seed and that it would come mysteriously as the seed develops, or the yeast raises the bread, but there is no

sudden break between the present and the future.⁴²

Granting the many passages that lend support to an eschatological Gospel and an eschatologically-minded Jesus we have yet to show that the so-called "consistent eschatology" which holds that there is nothing in the life of Jesus nor in his sayings which is not to be explained by eschatology (by Jesus' belief that he was to bring the end of the present order) may be fairly criticised as it has been by E. Von Dobschütz, e.g., who claims that this theory is maintained only by doing violence to a few ideas which he calls "transmuted eschatology" by which he means "transmuted in the sense that what was spoken of in Jewish eschatology as to come in the last days is taken here as already at hand in the lifetime of Jesus; transmuted at the same time in the other sense that what was expected as an external change is taken inwardly: not all people seeing it, but Jesus' disciples becoming aware of it;"⁴³

⁴²McCown, Chester Charlton, The Promise of His Coming, pp 146-148.

⁴³Von Dobschütz, Ernst, The Eschatology of the Gospels, pp 150-151.

and further by doing violence to a large number of non-eschatological matters. It does violence to Jesus' moral teaching if it is subordinated to merely "interimsethik"; it does violence to the group of sayings which represents the Messiah and the Kingdom as now present, if they are taken only as mere anticipations of the future while Jesus' real doctrine is claimed to be represented only by a purely eschatological group of sayings. ⁴⁴

Developing Conception

Thruout the paper there has been an attempt to show a developing conception of himself and his relation to the Kingdom on the part of Jesus. How at^{his} baptism, he felt laid upon him a certain responsibility of leadership in preparing men for the kingdom of God; how at the temptation he decided upon certain general principles as to the discharge of his responsibility; how it was not made clear to him for some time that the accepting of this responsibility meant that he must eventually adopt a Messianic career; how doubts and questions as to his

⁴⁴Ibid., pp 155-157

possible Messiahship were inevitably in his mind, but how he did not declare himself such until at Caesarea Philippi; and how immediately Jesus began to teach them that "the Son of Man must suffer many things" and be killed, quite in contrast to an earthly triumph.

"He believed that as God had chosen Moses and David so he had himself been chosen for a far greater task. Thru him the kingdom of God was to become a reality. This, in its essence, was his conviction, and under those forms of thought with which he worked it could only express itself in one way. According to the apocalyptic hope God was to fulfill his purposes through the Messiah, and Jesus had to identify himself with this mysterious figure. As contrasted with those who had only foretold the Kingdom he was to be the instrument of its coming, and therefore he was the Messiah. The name was inadequate, and he accepted it with misgivings; yet it was the only name whereby he could in any manner define the true meaning of his work.

"Jesus' claim to Messiahship must therefore be interpreted in the light of his whole conception of the kingdom. While he starts from the hope of a new age, he thinks not so much of an outward change as of the spiritual conditions which will obtain in the future. To have a will in harmony with God's will, to enter into fellowship with God, is to possess the Kingdom. The work of the Messiah is to make this new life possible. Through the Messiah men will attain to the Kingdom in the sense that they will apprehend the higher world, they will receive power to do God's will, they will know God as Father. This is not to import a fanciful allegorical meaning into

Jesus' claim to be Messiah, but only to explain it in accordance with his own teaching. Everywhere in Jewish thought the idea of a Messiah is determined by some given view of the Kingdom of God. When the Kingdom is Israel, delivered and exalted, the Messiah is the Messianic king. When it is the reign of righteousness he appears, as in the Psalms of Solomon, to establish justice on the earth. When it is a transcendental order, as in most of the apocalypses, he is a mysterious heavenly being. It would follow that Jesus likewise conceived of the Messiah as inaugurating such a Kingdom as he looked for. 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven': that was how he understood the Kingdom. When he declared himself Messiah he must have thought of his work in its moral significance. Through him the great spiritual change would be effected. The will of God would come at last to its fulfillment, in the world and in the hearts of men." ⁴⁵

"In that very hour there came certain Pharisees, saying to him, Get thee out, and go hence: for Herod would fain kill thee. And he said unto them, Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow and the third day I am perfected. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following: for it can not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." (Luke 13.31-33)

When Jesus heard this, the thought of seeking safety by leaving Palestine, which would have been an easy enough matter, was given no consideration. His mission was to Israel he felt and to go to Jerusalem and face the leaders

⁴⁵ Scott, Ernest F., The Kingdom of God, pp 125-27.

who were all powerful was the only course which Jesus deemed worthy. Such a conviction which meant almost certain death when coupled with the Messianic calling makes a grave complication. Was the Messiah to die? Such an outlook certainly affected Jesus' conception of his task.

We do not have many statements from Jesus about his mission but surely behind his discreetly-worded message to John the Baptist there was a hint of Messiahship. Scott interpreted it to say "I may not yet say whether I am indeed the promised Messiah; but it is more than possible." In Fiske and Easton's book, The Real Jesus, much is made of Jesus' reply to the disciples in Luke 10.21-22. There it is paraphrased thus:

"I thank thee, O Father that disposes all things, that the learned have rejected me, and my unlearned disciples have accepted me. I accept it thankfully, Father, since such is Thy will. Now I see God's whole plan! God alone knows what Messiahship truly is, and the Messiah alone knows what God's plan truly is: the Messiah--and the disciples whom he has taught." Luke tells us that Jesus in that very hour rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. It is as

tho a burden had been lifted from him. His mission to Israel's leaders was in vain. It must have seemed to Jesus that he had failed and then from the humble level of the nation came the disciples who had "proved their faith victoriously." It seemed a new conception that the "babes" of Israel could outdo the "Wise and prudent" but the facts proved to Jesus, at least, that it was God's will.

"Since the righteousness of the kingdom was so different from the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, the Messiah who was to bring a kingdom based on such righteousness, must also be very different. His way to reign must be the way of his teaching; he too must be 'gentle', 'merciful,' 'pure in heart', 'a peacemaker', and above all, 'persecuted for righteousness sake'. There was no other way. Only God the Father had known the full truth; now Jesus saw it also--and his disciples were learning it as well, though seeing the truth but dimly." ⁴⁶

The decision to go to Jerusalem Jesus very well knew would probably mean death; yet perhaps there was a possibility of Jerusalem repenting. At any rate Jesus went there to deliver God's will regardless of the results to himself. Facing death and knowing that he had not yet fulfilled the Messiahship and that if he

⁴⁶ Fiske, Charles, and Easton, Burton, The Real Jesus, pp 135-37.

failed he would be no Messiah; it is quite likely that Jesus conceived his own return in glory on the clouds according to the apocalyptic hope. If his success in this world was incomplete he must look for final victory from heaven. ⁴⁷

May we not find in our own experience something of the change in Jesus' attitude. May it not be that like some of us, enthusiastic from his religious awakening, Jesus believed that if he with a few others should give themselves unreservedly to God that God's will might be worked out in the world within his own generation? How many have thought that at various times down thru the ages! Witness the old Student Volunteer motto: "The Evangelisation of the World Within Our Generation!" But as disappointments and suffering came, his views were changed. Perhaps he believed that the giving of his life would hasten the fulfillment of his mission, altho he seems to have hoped for a different way out even in Gethsemane. But "the path to victory passed over Golgotha. And Jesus freely chose to follow that path. The title embodies the certainty of his faith,

⁴⁷ Easton, Burton Scott, Christ in the Gospels, p. 191-2.

the unreservedness of his devotion, the fullness of his courage. He was willing to make the supreme sacrifice in order that God might reign in the hearts of men and the world of mankind." ⁴⁸

Interimsethik

Not a few modern writers have put forth the view that Jesus taught only an interim ethic--a morality that would be valid only for the short period before the New Age should be ushered in. Certainly Jesus' teaching was intended for the present world and if we assume that he pushed the apocalyptic idea to its logical issue we must admit such a view. But as Scott shows, the theory of an interim ethic rests on a false hypothesis that it was the intention of Jesus to prescribe a set of rules. Whereas we have found his precepts as so many illustrations of great principles, which are by their very nature valid. Love, truth, goodness, are among the highest things for all time and anyone who practices them is not using a "makeshift morality".

Furthermore, while Jesus was influenced by current

⁴⁸ McCown, Chester Charlton, The Promise of His Coming, p 164.

beliefs he did not allow himself to be fettered by them. Jewish apocalyptic was not a formal system. There are certain broad ideas which run thruout the whole but the different apocalyptic writers all feel perfect freedom as their writings readily attest, to modify the ideas in the interest of the practical message which they have in mind. How then with any degree of fairness can we require of Jesus alone a certain fixed apocalyptic belief?

Jesus' absolute trust in God who was reigning during his own day and to whose will men might submit unreservedly, lay at the heart of his life and teaching. To make him merely a herald of a new kingdom is to remove the keystone. "His attitude to apocalyptic was, in fact, very similar to his attitude toward the law. He accepted the Law, and appeared to aim at nothing more than its larger fulfillment; yet his teaching was in principle opposed to the law and was in the course of time to dissolve it. In like manner he accepted the apocalyptic beliefs and used them as the forms in which he proclaimed his message. But the message itself must in no way be confounded with the forms. In its essence

it was in conflict with them and could not fully unfold itself until it had thrown them off." ⁴⁹

Jesus had to use the language of his time to make his message meaningful to his hearers.

It is only fair to say that in his recent book Professor Scott gives a broader and more scholarly view at this point, showing that he has taken into account the recent studies in the eschatology of Jesus; and yet his former views predominate as shown in the following quotations:

"A generation ago, when the importance of the apocalyptic literature was first recognized, this side of his (Jesus') thought was magnified, almost to the exclusion of every other. It was maintained that all the older interpretations must now be set aside. Jesus was an apocalyptic enthusiast, and all our estimates of his purpose must be controlled by this primary fact. Such a one-sided view is no longer possible. . . The 13th chapter of Mark, with its parallels in Matthew and Luke, is the one passage in which the coming crisis is discussed in detail, and it seems mainly to be composed of alien material, with a few authentic sayings as a nucleus.

"Nearly all the apocalyptic references in the Gospels need to be carefully scrutinized. Even when they may be accepted as genuine we have always to reckon with the possibility that something has been added or suggested in the interest of the later hope. . .

⁴⁹ Scott, Ernest F., The Ethical Teaching of Jesus, pp 42-44.

"The apocalyptic element in the teaching cannot, indeed, be set aside as mere imagery, a sort of pictorial or parabolic language which is meant to convey spiritual truth. Jesus believed that God would interpose in some marvelous way and change the world's order. He expected a literal Judgment by which God's people would be set apart for eternal life. All this belonged to the current idea of the Kingdom as set forth in scripture, and he never thought of questioning it. But as he looked forward to the Kingdom his mind was intent not on its external aspects but on the change it would involve in all moral and spiritual conditions. In that coming age God would reign. His will alone would prevail. Men would be wrought into full harmony with his will and would obey it gladly and spontaneously. This was the real significance which the hope of the Kingdom had for Jesus. . .

"It may be inferred that the sudden coming of the Kingdom was not an essential element of Jesus' thought. He took over the traditional hope, which assumed that the change would be brought about by way of catastrophe; but this belonged to the framework which had been given him. For himself it mattered little whether God would fulfill his purpose by a gradual process or by a momentary act. Indeed with his new conception of the Kingdom as consisting above all in the full acceptance of the will of God he could not think of it as appearing in a single flash. Without the inward change the outward one would mean nothing, and the growth of a new will in men would necessarily be slow and difficult. This was fully perceived by Jesus when he turned his back on all swift, spectacular methods of forcing the Kingdom, and gave himself to the thankless task of teaching. . .

"It has often been argued that this origin of the message affects its whole validity. The hope of the Kingdom, as we now see it, had arisen out of the peculiar history of the Jewish people, and

reflects ideas which have been long outgrown. We cannot now believe that God is suddenly to change the world's order, and since Jesus rested his teaching on that illusion must it not follow that the whole structure falls to the ground? Those sayings about God and his purpose which seem to breathe the timeless spirit of religion are after all bound up with ancient imaginations which are now meaningless. To this it may be answered that the essential message of Jesus does not depend on the particular forms in which he expressed it. Just as his words can be translated out of the language in which they were uttered, so they can be detached from the apocalyptic hopes which were like the mother tongue of his thought." ⁵⁰

The Kingdom

There is ample evidence to show that the kingdom of God was the central theme of Jesus. His preaching begins with: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the gospel." (Mk 1.15) Many of his parables begin: "The Kingdom of God is like unto"; the first petition in the Lord's prayer is "Thy kingdom come;" the superscription on his cross was "The King of the Jews."

In his baptism experience the voice from heaven may be interpreted to mean that he had a sudden realization that his was a conception of God and a sense of nearness to him that no one else had. He felt the urge to go out

⁵⁰ Scott, Ernest F., The Kingdom of God, pp 58-59, 59-60 63-64, 72-73, 115-116.

and proclaim this message that involved the coming of the kingdom and was connected with it in some way, not clear to him then, perhaps. Nevertheless he believed that God must come to save the people and that he was the one commissioned to carry that message and to prepare men for that coming. He must teach men to do God's will, he must establish among men a confidence in God, a faith that tho their struggle seemed vain God had promised the kingdom and it would come.

In this age many hope to establish the kingdom thru the combined efforts of men of goodwill, but this was not Jesus' conception. The kingdom was God's, men could not establish it, God would bring it in his own time. No one knew just when not even "the Son, but the father." In the parable of the seed (Mk 4.26-29) Jesus makes this very clear by illustrating the coming of the kingdom as a seed which a man plants and has nothing more to do but wait for the harvest. ⁵¹

Jesus called men to forsake their habits of shaping their lives to the requirements of the world which was soon to pass away and to "prepare themselves for the new order of the kingdom of God." ⁵²

⁵¹ Von Dobschütz, Ernst, The Eschatology of the Gospels, pp 157-8

⁵² Scott, Ernest F., Ethical Teachings of Jesus, pp 48-50.

We have Jesus saying to the Pharisees, "The reign of God is not coming as you hope to catch sight of it; no one will say, 'Here it is' or 'There it is' for the Reign of God is now in your midst." ⁵³ Tho we may not be sure of the correct interpretation of "in your midst" yet the fact that it is not to be observed in this certain place or that certain place takes away the idea of space and transfers it to the spiritual realm. He may have referred to the reign of God in the hearts of his followers or he may have referred to his own life among them.

Again we have Jesus' last words to Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, slaying the prophets and stoning those who have been sent to you! How often I would fain have gathered your children as a fowl gathers her brood under her wings! But you would not have it!" ⁵⁴ He does not say I would have summoned you together as a King his people but how often would I have taught your children as a fowl her brood and would have prepared them for the days to come.

There are many passages to be quoted in stressing a spectacular second coming also and the above statements

⁵³Luke 17.20-24 Moffatt's Translation

⁵⁴Luke 13.34 Moffatt's Translation

are not intended to imply that eschatology had no place in the mind of Jesus. But a just interpretation must give to each group of sayings its own value as E. Von Dobschütz points out.

We conclude that from the time of his baptism Jesus sought to establish the will of God in the lives of the people and if before his death he was led to believe that people would never become righteous and establish a new order without a miraculous ending of the present order, and if he faced death believing that it would hasten a more glorious advent, this need not affect his consciousness of his mission--the kingdom was still God's, he was awaiting God's time for the advent. Even the Son of Man in Enoch was only Son of the Head of Days, he was intermediary.

Conclusion

"The plainest human personality remains for us a problem and a mystery. But when personality reaches the peaks and pinnacles that are clearly in view in all their grandeur and glory and yet tower high above us, then we begin to feel, to use the language of Professor Otto, that we are in the presence of the holy; we feel that it is wholly other than ourselves, and yet we are irresistibly drawn to it. Such is the case in Jesus." ⁵⁵

We cannot explain Jesus, but in the light of this study I have reached the conclusion: that Jesus conceived his mission to be, not the bringing in of the kingdom or urging his followers to establish it, as I had supposed, but rather that his mission was to prepare men to live in the kingdom when God should see fit to come and rule. I believe that this throws a different light on the petition "Thy kingdom come" as well as other sayings of Jesus.

The mass of Jesus' teachings are on right relations between man and man, and between man and God, which shows that his emphasis was on righteous living; the kingdom of God which he taught was a kingdom of righteousness, a kingdom (realm) of persons living in right

⁵⁵ Bundy, Walter E., The Religion of Jesus, p 60.

relations to one another and to God. "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Mk 3.35) To show men the will of God and how to fellowship in this great family Jesus lived and died.

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